

HIRE A VETERAN WEEK

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 5) expressing support for the designation and goals of "Hire a Veteran Week" and encouraging the President to issue a proclamation supporting those goals. The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 5

Whereas the people of the United States have a sincere appreciation and respect for the military personnel who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas veterans possess special qualities and skills that make them ideal candidates for employment, but many veterans encounter difficulties in securing employment;

Whereas it would be inconsistent, inconsiderate, and contrary to the economic competitiveness of the United States to neglect the post-military needs of the military personnel who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas many of the brave men and women who have served the United States so gallantly and selflessly in the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq since September 11, 2001, are beginning to return home to be reunited with their loved ones and will be reentering the workforce or searching for their first jobs outside of military service; and

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, the Office of Personnel Management, and many State and local governments administer veterans programs and have veterans employment representatives both to ensure that veterans receive the services to which they are entitled and to promote employer interest in hiring veterans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the importance of the men and women who have served or who currently serve in the Armed Forces of the United States;

(2) supports the designation of an appropriate week as "Hire a Veteran Week"; and

(3) encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon employers, labor organizations, veterans service organizations, and Federal, State, and local governmental agencies (including such agencies in the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any other territory or possession of the United States) to lend their support to increase employment of the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 5.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my colleagues for allowing this bill to come to the floor. I

want to thank my partner in the bill, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, for his work and support on the measure, and also the chairman and ranking members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Armed Services Committee.

The bill calls upon the President to establish a permanent "Hire a Veteran Week" to help promote employment of veterans in a more concentrated fashion. Last year the House passed this bill by a voice vote. The bill enjoyed overwhelming support on both sides of the aisle because all of us understood that we had a lot more to do to help our veterans find jobs, start businesses on their own and get ahead as employees; and we still do have much more to do. I am grateful that the House leadership has allowed this bill to come forward today.

One of the reasons I am glad we are doing this is, we need to change the paradigm of how we think about veterans. Too often we spend a couple of days a year, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, thinking about veterans. But for too many Americans, these have simply become additional days to go shopping instead of recognizing the courage, the service, the sacrifice of those who have worn the uniform of our Nation, and that needs to change.

Since September 11, 2001, America has been creating the largest new pool of veterans since the Vietnam era. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have passed through Iraq and Afghanistan, including tens of thousands in our Guard and Reserve. All of these veterans are returning home and many, many of them, need help in obtaining and sustaining employment.

The most basic thing we can do is remind employers on a regular basis that veterans make great employees. It is not just that we owe it to them, although we do. It is not just that it is a matter of fairness, although it is. It is also that they are good workers with real, very real, life experience.

Some companies are making an effort to do this. One of them, in my district, Facile Corporation, has offices at Fort Monmouth, also in Camden, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Washington, Arlington, Colorado Springs and in, Madam Speaker, the State of California as well. Facile is a diversified company providing a range of services to military and civilian clients, information technology services and so forth.

But what makes this company special for me is the fact that 26 percent of its workforce nationwide is comprised of veterans. This didn't just happen. The employer made a conscious and conscientious effort to do so, to hire these veterans.

Last November, just before Veterans Day, I had the privilege of meeting with employees of Facile and learning how this effort to hire veterans truly was a win/win proposition for the company and for the veterans. I came away more convinced than ever that we need

to institutionalize that kind of outreach, which is why I am proud to cosponsor this bill with a number of other colleagues here.

□ 1430

We face many difficult days ahead. Those wearing the uniform of the United States, the various uniforms who are serving in harm's way to defend us, face many difficult days ahead. They should not face more difficulties when they come home. One thing we can all agree on is that we need to give our veterans every opportunity to achieve the American Dream. That is the point of this legislation, to create the Hire a Veteran Week and to encourage the President to support the goal of Hire a Veteran Week.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The resolution before us today is identical to H. Con. Res. 125, passed by the House in the 109th Congress on July 24, 2006. I want to thank Congressman HOLT and Congressman BROWN for bringing forward this very, very important resolution.

Vince Lombardi said: "The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender." Maybe that is why the men and women on the front lines today, who have sacrificed the most to achieve a success, remain dedicated to achieving victory in the face of adversity. And it is this determination and dedication that make our veterans such outstanding employees when they return to civilian life.

American veterans, especially those who serve the Nation during challenging times, understand the value of work. When these men and women return to civilian life, they only ask that the Nation, through her employers, recognize the value of their experience as members of our Armed Forces.

Today, our Nation is honored by the service of millions of volunteer service men and women, including hundreds of thousands who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. By putting these veterans to work in our factories, our offices, construction sites, and all types of industries, we give them the opportunity to continue contributing to the Nation they have so honorably defended in uniform.

Today, diversity is a common goal of employers. I would offer that one facet of diversity can only be provided by a veteran, that 1 percent of society that protects and defends the other 99 percent.

I also want to thank those businesses who are proactively working to hire veterans today. I am working with many Arkansas-based businesses. In fact, in my situation and Congresswoman HERSETH's situation, we are working with businesses all over the country, both large and small, to encourage additional veterans outreach. I

urge my colleagues to take the initiative in reaching out to businesses in your communities as well.

To the Nation's employers, large and small, I say hire a veteran. You will get an employee who understands honor and commitment, who is skilled and drug free and loyal. You can't do any better than that.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH).

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 5, a resolution endorsing the designation and goals of Hire a Veteran Week. I would like to thank my friends, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), for introducing this important resolution.

As the chairwoman of the House Veterans' Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, which maintains jurisdiction over veterans employment and re-employment matters, I have been working with the ranking member and former chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. BOOZMAN, to explore the perceptions, activities, employment practices, and entrepreneurship opportunities for former servicemembers.

The men and women serving in the military today are professional, highly trained, and motivated. And if given the opportunity, they would be valuable additions to our workforce and overall economy.

As we all know, this is a key transitional period for many members of our Armed Forces serving overseas. Increasing numbers of service men and women are expected to return home from Iraq and Afghanistan. The men and women in uniform who defend this country and make our economic and political systems possible have earned a fair opportunity to successfully transition from military service to civilian life and employment.

We have asked hundreds of thousands of our best and brightest, including a great number of National Guard and Reservists from South Dakota and across the country, to serve overseas in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

We owe these brave men and women and their families a great deal for their sacrifice during these difficult times. We owe them the opportunity to make good on the American Dream they have fought to defend. Indeed, our Nation's employers would serve their business, their customers, and their bottom line well by hiring a veteran of the United States military.

H. Con. Res. 5 helps recognize the achievements of veterans and benefits of their employment. I ask my colleagues to support all veterans by supporting this resolution.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), one of the gentlemen working with Mr. HOLT that was able to bring this resolution forward.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, which will do so much to highlight the contributions made by so many veterans even after they have stopped wearing the uniform.

I want to especially call attention to the hard work of my colleague Mr. HOLT. During the last Congress, I was proud to work with him on this resolution and am glad to see it come to the floor so early in this Congress.

Leadership, teamwork, integrity: these are all skills and qualities that employers today are looking for in order to compete in today's fast-paced and complex business environment. Thankfully, these are all attributes our Nation's veterans bring to the table. Their training in our Nation's military and experience working under pressure have provided them with skills and qualities that should put them at the top of any hiring list.

However, many veterans still find getting a job after they leave our military a challenge. Veterans may not understand how their military skills can translate into civilian life, and employers may not recognize the benefit of focusing on hiring veterans. This resolution highlights some of the ways we are trying to help both veterans and employers.

One tool out there is the Web site HireVetsFirst.gov, which is a comprehensive career Web site for hiring veterans of America's military. The Web site contains dedicated resources for matching employment opportunities with veterans. I urge Members to highlight this Web site as much as possible in the coming weeks.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mr. HOLT for introducing this resolution and thank Chairman FILNER and Mr. BUYER for their work to bring it to the floor. It says a lot that we are considering such an important resolution so early in the 110th Congress.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his good words.

Madam Speaker, now I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and himself a military veteran.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him for bringing this important resolution forward.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 5, the designation of Hire a Veteran Week. I encourage the President to issue a proclamation supporting this designation.

I would once again like to thank Mr. HOLT for offering this resolution and thank the committee on Veterans' Affairs, Mr. BOOZMAN, who has been a

strong leader on veterans affairs issues. I am proud to be a member of that committee.

As a Member and as a veteran of the United States Army, I understand the important and sometimes difficult adjustments that face our soldiers when they return home from their tour of duty. Securing employment should not be one of those difficult tasks.

Many are not aware that the men and women of the United States military have amazing skills that translate perfectly into civilian occupations. Veterans also have the ability to learn new skills and concepts and can enter the workforce with those skills proven in real-world situations. Veterans know what it means to do "an honest day's work." Employers know that they are gaining someone with a track record of integrity.

Madam Speaker, we must take care of veterans when they return home. We value the commitment that veterans have shown to this great country. We value what veterans have learned from their military experience. Together, we can use that experience to continue our country's prosperity and the individual prosperity of our service men and women. There is no better way to send this message than by hiring a veteran.

I would like to encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important resolution.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN).

Ms. FALLIN. Madam Speaker, Oklahoma has a proud tradition of men and women who serve in our military and put their lives on the line to defend our freedoms. We have over 350,000 military veterans and more than one in 10 Oklahomans who serve in the military. And we are very proud of our veterans, Madam Speaker, and we believe that the men and the women returning from the war on terror deserve our honor and our respect and a hero's welcome home.

It is, however, an unfortunate truth that the military men and women returning to duty do not always return to the jobs that they deserve. In fact, military veterans of various ages, both men and women, face considerably higher unemployment rates than their civilian counterparts. Madam Speaker, this is what I believe is an injustice. America's heroes should not return home from the battlefield to face unemployment and hardships.

It is for this reason I wholeheartedly support the creation of a Hire a Veteran Week. The resolution before us today is an important chance for Congress to encourage our employers to help our war veterans returning home by lending them a helping hand in finding employment and supporting their families. We must reaffirm our commitment to our men and women who have served our great Nation.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), a

member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and himself a retired command sergeant major in the Minnesota National Guard.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for giving me this opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I rise in enthusiastic support of House Concurrent Resolution 5 on Hire a Veteran Week. This resolution will recognize the importance of our service men and women by designating an appropriate week as Hire a Veteran Week and will encourage the President to make a proclamation encouraging all employers to hire veterans.

I spent 24 years in the Army National Guard and did retire as a command sergeant major. Having recruited, trained, deployed with, and returned home with soldiers of many different ages, I know how difficult it can be to reintegrate into everyday civilian life. These veterans, who have sacrificed so much and asked for so little, deserve to return home to a solid job market and solid finances for their family. We owe it to them to use the power of this body to recognize those sacrifices and encourage our employers nationwide to hire veterans whenever possible.

These soldiers are truly the hardest working, noblest Americans we have, and any employer should be fortunate to call these veterans employees.

Madam Speaker, I ask the support, the unanimous support, of the entire House in creating a Hire a Veteran Week and encouraging this great Nation to work to employ its veterans. It is the very least we can do for them when they have given so much to us.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Tennessee is known as the Volunteer State because we have consistently been willing to go and to serve. There are approximately 70,000 veterans in the First District of Tennessee. My district is also the home of the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center, a 500-bed teaching medical facility located in northeast Tennessee.

Veterans possess special qualities and skills such as a strong work ethic, training, discipline, and dedication to make the ideal candidates for employment. Our dedicated men and women have sacrificed so much for us. Now it is our turn to support them.

I would like to encourage President Bush to issue a proclamation calling upon employers, veterans service organizations, and Federal and State and local government agencies to lend their support for an increase in employment for the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to Mr. ROSKAM of Illinois.

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 5, which we have heard spoken about frequently in the past few minutes; but it is deeply personal to me.

My life was influenced greatly, Madam Speaker, in 1944, and it was actually 17 years before I was born. A fellow named George Jenkins took the beach at Normandy and was killed there. He was an Iowan. And his mother and dad, Roy and Ella Jenkins, decided to do something with his life insurance money. They took it and they chose a young man, who happened to be my father, V.R. Roskam from Iowa, and they plucked him out of adversity and plucked him out of a bad situation. And they paid his tuition, room, board, books, fees, spending money; and they even bought him this class ring that I have on my hand today.

□ 1445

Madam Speaker, it was the generosity of the Jenkins family in honoring a veteran that literally changed my life and the trajectory of our family, even before I was born, even before I was thought of. And so I rise in proud support today of this notion of singling out veterans.

It is an area where so many times in our public life today there is a great deal of strife, it seems, among us. But it is this group of people that we can universally come together and honor and celebrate and hold up high.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 5 which expresses support for Hire a Veteran Week. I could not agree more with this resolution or with the initiative it expresses support for. I believe it should be the goal of all businesses, whenever feasible, to hire a veteran.

Madam Speaker, America's brave men and women put their lives, both personal and professional, on hold to serve this country and defend freedom. The very least we can do as a body is endorse initiatives intended to help with the transition back into society. I am proud to join Members on both sides of the aisle in supporting this legislation and encouraging the President to issue a proclamation supporting the goals of "Hire a Veteran."

Madam Speaker, I am an ardent supporter of America's veterans, having already sponsored three pieces of legislation intended to improve veterans'

benefits. As such, I will continue to support legislation intended to improve the lives of our veterans and their families.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, with no more speakers present, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to Congressman REICHERT of Washington.

(Mr. REICHERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REICHERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, as a veteran of the United States Air Force Reserve, I am pleased to rise in support of this resolution. It is our responsibility to provide for all of our veterans' needs, whether they are on the front lines of global conflict or in the communities to which they return in civilian life.

Our efforts must be proactive in their outreach and comprehensive in their scope. In a few short weeks, I will be holding a veterans resource fair to further assist Washington State veterans to discover new jobs and job training opportunities. I encourage all of my colleagues to conduct similar events in their districts.

We must forge partnerships between the public and private sectors to help veterans find jobs. I am proud to work with Labor Ready, the Nation's leading provider of temporary labor to support the creation of thousands of jobs and opportunities for jobs for National Guard members and reservists across this country.

This resolution is just one of many measures that we must pass in support of those among us who have made individual sacrifices to preserve our freedom. I hope that we will continue to work together in a bipartisan way to protect and promote meaningful benefits for our veterans.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), the ranking member of the Oversight Subcommittee of Veterans' Affairs.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 5.

When men and women of our country separate from the military, they leave with some of the best training and discipline in the whole wide world. While one would think that the private sector employers would jump at the opportunity to hire those individuals, that unfortunately is not always the case. In fact, recently discharged veterans see a higher unemployment rate than the national average.

Today's bill supports the goals of Hire a Veteran Week and sends an important message to support both our Nation's veterans and employers.

Moreover, employers will receive a strong reminder of the highly motivated and skilled segment of our labor force that is sometimes overlooked.

Listen up, America; it is time to help our veterans find jobs as they transition back from the military. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE).

(Mrs. MUSGRAVE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas.

Madam Speaker, I come today with many other colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support House Concurrent Resolution 5, expressing our support for Hire a Veteran Week. Many people go into the military and gain incredible life experiences and discipline. They have so many skills to offer when they come home, and many of them come home wanting to resume a normal life. An important part of a normal life is having a job.

I really believe that the public sector and the private sector can express our gratitude for the sacrifices that these veterans have made on our behalf. Many of these men and women have made economic sacrifices while they have been serving this country, and they need to come home and have encouragement from all of us. So a great way to say thank you is to promote the Hire a Veteran Week.

I am encouraging the President to issue a proclamation in support of this. This is very personal to me. My father-in-law is a veteran, my uncle was a World War II veteran that was captured during the Battle of the Bulge, and my son and daughter-in-law are currently serving in the military.

And I think so many families are affected by this that we benefit, and the veterans and their families will benefit, if we encourage this.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, in closing, I just want to thank Mr. HOLT for his efforts, and Mr. BROWN, in bringing this forward. I can only echo what has been said in this Chamber about the value of hiring veterans and how important this is. We are a nation at war, and these men and women and their families sacrifice greatly.

And so, again, I know that certainly my efforts, I think Congress and their efforts through doing things like this, all of our efforts in trying to solve the problem of putting our veterans back to work.

Again, thank you very much, and a special thanks to the staff for their hard work in bringing this forward.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

Madam Speaker, I thank those who have spoken today. I, too, thank the

staff of the majority and minority on the Veterans' Committee for preparing this legislation.

Madam Speaker, our veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq will require a range of services and assistance in making the transition back to civilian life. We will take up many issues related to those veterans. We will take up issues of war and peace here on the floor.

In the meantime, we should remind all employers, both in the government sector and in the private sector that hiring veterans is a smart choice. Their discipline, their work ethic, their prior service to our Nation make them excellent employees. I know. I have a couple working for me. They are superb.

We should pass this legislation for Hire a Veteran Week because we owe it to those who have borne the battle. We owe it to our country. Employers owe it to their stockholders and their clients and their customers, and they owe it to themselves.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that I hope will become a reality soon so that we will have a Hire a Veteran Week in America.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, today as we prepare to pass House Concurrent Resolution 5, which will express support for the designation of Hire a Veteran Week, I would like to highlight two people, who have built a Web site that has assisted many of the military heroes and veterans from my Congressional District find employment upon their return home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In February, 2005, Mark and Tori Baird created the Web site www.hiremarines.com to serve Marines at Camp Pendleton, CA, who were seeking to find either part-time or full employment after bravely serving our Nation. This site quickly caught on with local employers and media, and soon the Bairds received e-mails from military personnel across the country that wanted to use their site. After 6 months, www.hiremarines.com was expanded to include servicemen from all branches of the Armed Forces, both in Southern California and beyond, and the name of the site was changed to www.hirepatriots.com.

As a U.S. Army veteran, I have a sincere appreciation and respect for the military personnel who serve in our Armed Forces. Veterans possess special qualities and skills that make them ideal candidates for employment, and the Congress should do everything that it can to encourage more employers to hire them.

Many of the brave men and women who have served the United States so gallantly and selflessly in the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq since September 11, 2001, are beginning to return home to be reunited with their loved ones. They will soon be reentering the workforce or searching for their first jobs outside of military service.

H. Con. Res. 5 is an important effort to highlight this issue. I hope it will encourage other citizens to follow in the example of Mark and Tori in either hiring veterans, or providing assistance to those that are currently seeking jobs.

This is a small thing to do for these brave men and women who defend our safety and freedom.

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 5, a bill expressing our commitment to expanding employment and business opportunities for our Nation's veterans.

H. Con. Res. 5 will establish Hire a Veteran Week, and encourages the President to issue a proclamation supporting those goals. Our Nation's veterans must be given the opportunities they deserve to make a successful transition to civilian life, and build a successful future for themselves and their families.

There are now more than 25 million living veterans in the United States. These dedicated men and women are among our Nation's greatest citizens. Many of our Nation's leading figures in both the private and public sectors are military veterans.

Military service provides valuable training in a variety of specialized fields, and helps build leadership, problem solving and management skills. Military veterans have also proven their dedication to the service of their Nation and their communities, and are eager for the opportunity to continue serving the public good in whichever field they enter after leaving the military. The opportunities we provide veterans today will benefit our Nation for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in thanking our Nation's veterans for their service and supporting H. Con. Res. 5, establishing Hire a Veteran Week, and I encourage all members of the American business community to recognize the value of hiring veterans and contracting with veteran-owned businesses.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 5.

Providing our veterans with the resources necessary to make their transition to civilian life as effortless and successful as possible is a goal all members of Congress share. This resolution reiterates the need for employers to hire veterans.

We must make a commitment as a Nation to ensure the men and women who put on a uniform to protect and defend our Nation have the ability to find employment within the government or private sector upon their return.

While the previous Congress enacted several pieces of legislation to improve Veterans' benefits, there is still more to be done. This resolution takes another step toward focusing our country on the need to increase veteran's employment.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 5, to express support for the designation and goals of Hire a Veteran Week. This concurrent resolution serves to recognize the men and women in our Armed Forces by encouraging support for them when they come home.

One of the biggest items on the agenda of the Democratic majority this Congress is to bring the troops home, because we believe that this is the best way we can support them. At the same time, it is equally critical to continue supporting them once they are home and no longer in active duty, by providing them and their families with the resources they need.

American veterans make up over a third of our nation's homeless population, and about 250,000 live on our city streets. Madam Speaker, it is shameful that those who served

our Nation heroically must endure such conditions.

Last year, the U.S. Labor Department found that 15.6 percent of America's youngest veterans, aged 20 to 24 years old, were unemployed, as opposed to 8.7 percent of non-veterans at that age. This rate has since fallen slightly, perhaps due to the efforts of the U.S. Labor Department's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, VETS. It is important that we join them in recognizing that veterans need and deserve our support at home too.

I commend the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. HOLT, for introducing this resolution to establish Hire a Veteran Week and to encourage employers to remember our Nation's heroes. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 5, a truly outstanding piece of legislation that reflects the best of our values.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, this resolution expresses the support for the designation and goals of Hire a Veteran Week, and calls upon the President to issue a proclamation supporting these goals. It is identical to the legislation passed by the House in the 109th Congress on July 24, 2006.

America's veterans deserve special employment opportunity more than any other sector of society. These men and women have volunteered to put themselves in harm's way to preserve the Nation's way of life and economic system. They have worn the uniform from pole to pole, often risking their lives not only in combat, but also in exploring, rebuilding infrastructures devastated by natural disasters, providing medical care in remote locations, and transporting refugees from genocide. They answer the Nation's call to duty, asking in return only our support and our thanks.

Veterans are the most diverse communities in America. They come from every major ethnic and socioeconomic group. Today's veterans are goal-oriented, physically fit, know how to take and give orders, and are comfortable with technology. The best way to say thanks to veterans for their service is to give them the opportunity to prove their worth in the workplace.

I also want to thank Congressman JOHN BOOZMAN and Congresswoman STEPHANIE HERSETH for their very effective work during the 109th Congress to improve employment opportunities for veterans, and particularly disabled veterans, and I look forward to their continuing efforts during the 110th Congress.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing this legislation to come to the floor for consideration, and ask that my colleagues support the bill, H. Con. Res. 5.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 5.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those voting have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the

Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CONGRATULATING LOVIE SMITH AND TONY DUNGY ON BECOMING THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEAD COACHES OF NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE TEAMS TO QUALIFY FOR THE SUPER BOWL

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 90) congratulating Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears and Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts on becoming the first African-American head coaches of National Football League teams to qualify for the Super Bowl.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 90

Whereas in the 40 Super Bowls prior to Super Bowl XLI, to be held on February 4, 2007, no National Football League (NFL) team that played in the Super Bowl had an African-American head coach;

Whereas on January 21, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois, the Chicago Bears, coached by Lovie Smith—an African-American—defeated the New Orleans Saints by a score of 39 to 14 in the National Football Conference Championship game and advanced to Super Bowl XLI;

Whereas Lovie Smith was named the 13th head coach in Chicago Bears history on January 15, 2004;

Whereas Lovie Smith was named the Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year for 2005;

Whereas Lovie Smith's 11 victories in 2005 are the most by a second-year coach in the history of the Chicago Bears and he became the first second-year coach of the Bears to win a division title, earning the second seed in the National Football Conference playoffs;

Whereas on January 21, 2007, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the Indianapolis Colts, coached by Tony Dungy—an African-American—defeated the New England Patriots by a score of 38 to 34 in the American Football Conference's Championship game and also advanced to Super Bowl XLI;

Whereas Anthony Kevin "Tony" Dungy was named head coach of the Indianapolis Colts on January 22, 2002;

Whereas the 2006 season was Tony Dungy's 5th with the Colts and 11th as an NFL head coach;

Whereas Tony Dungy is the 35th coach in NFL history to earn 100 career victories (including playoff victories);

Whereas Tony Dungy leads all NFL head coaches in wins from 1999 to 2005, with a record of 78 wins and 34 defeats;

Whereas the NFL had a record 7 African-American head coaches in 2006 and a record of 197 African-American coaches total, including 7 assistant head coaches; and

Whereas since Frederick Douglass "Fritz" Pollard became the first African-American head coach in the NFL in 1922, there have been nine other African-American head coaches in the NFL—including five who are currently serving: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives congratulates Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears and Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts for their accomplishments and for being the first African-American head coaches of National Football League teams to qualify for the Super Bowl.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, this Sunday, history will be made in the National Football League when two African American head coaches battle for a Super Bowl championship.

Not only is this the first time a black head coach has vied for the title, but two have done so in the same season. Lovie Smith, of the Chicago Bears, and Tony Dungy, of the Indianapolis Colts, are hailed as two of the most humble in the league.

In an era where professional sports is crowded with big egos and loud mouths, these two quietly push their players to be better athletes and better individuals.

Like myself, Coach Smith grew up in a small town in the South. Coach Smith talks about how growing up in the small town of Big Sandy, Texas, taught him the values of hard work, self-determination, self-discipline and teamwork. These are American values taught in a small town.

One thing that I admire about Lovie Smith is that he approaches coaching as a professor, as a mentor. He does not yell or swear at his players. He teaches them and motivates them. He builds his players up, reflecting a strength of character to be commended and imitated.

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Coach Smith started his coaching career studying under Tony Dungy in Tampa Bay, and the two developed a defense that relied on team speed and hard hitting. They also developed a close friendship that continues, even as opponents in the largest single sporting event in America.

Through their relationship, both have become brilliant defensive football minds and refined player managers. Their class and work ethic make them part of an elite group of coaches, and their contributions continue to have a great effect on league diversity in the coaching ranks. Their achievements stretch far beyond the football field, and their impact is felt throughout the entire African American, as well as the entire American, community.

I congratulate both of these coaches for their hard work and success. Of course I want them both to be successful on Sunday, but I must confess that I would rather that Lovie Smith be more successful than his mentor.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.